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BOOK NOTICES.

The Christian Philosophy Quarterly, October, 1881. Edited by Rev. Charles F. Deems, D.D. New York: Published for the American Institute of Christian Philosophy. Anson D. F. Randolph & Co., 900 Broadway. Two dollars a year; fifty cents a copy.

Contents: (1) Historical. (2) The Cry of the Conflict, by Charles F. Deems. (3) What we mean by Christian Philosophy, by Noah Porter. (4) Some Difficulties in Modern Materialism, by Borden P. Bowne. (5) The Religious Aspect of the American Scientific Association, by H. S. Trowbridge.

Most of the articles in this number were delivered, it seems, at the "Summer School of Christian Philosophy," held at Greenwood Lake. The articles of Dr. Porter and Professor Bowne, either or both, are of sufficient value to make the reputation of any journal of philosophy.

Kantian Ethics and the Ethics of Evolution; a Critical Study. By J. Gould Schurman, M. A. (Lond.), D. Sc. (Edinb.). Published by the Hibbert Trustees. London and Edinburgh: Williams & Norgate; New York: Scribner, 1881.

This book seems to me to be the best contribution to the critical study of the Ethics of Kant which has so far appeared in English. The discussion of Mr. Spencer's "Data of Ethics," which forms the second part of the work, also displays great vigor and independence of thought, but it is hardly equal to the first and larger part. Dr. Schurman writes with remarkable ease and grace, and his expositions and criticisms always exhibit that thorough command of the matter in hand which comes from knowledge and thought at first hand. I shall not attempt to follow the progress of his close and searching criticism in all its detail, but I shall rather make one or two remarks on points in the doctrine of Kant to which he does not, as I think, do perfect justice.

To derive from Kant all that is best in him, it is necessary to keep a watchful eye on the goal towards which his inquiry is leading, as well as to examine with care the actual statements he makes at any of the intermediate points in his progress towards that goal. In his examination of Kant's distinction of the "intelligible" and "empirical" character in man, which is one of the numerous logical distinctions drawn by Kant, Dr. Schurman has hardly borne this indispensable rule of fruitful Kantian criticism sufficiently in mind, and the result is that, valuable as his remarks are in bringing out the dualism of which Kant never quite got rid, they fail to indicate the actual advance made by him. "Kant maintains that, though human actions are unchangeably determined in the empirical character of each individual, they are nevertheless free; for that empirical character, whence they flow, is itself the freely originated product of the intelligible character." Of this doctrine "The Determinism of Schelling and Schopenhauer is the logical outcome" (p. 6). "Empirical volitions, as following in time, constitute a succession, the members of which, according to Kant, are causally related to the other events in time. Everything that falls in time is caused by what has already happened in time; volitions occur in time, *ergo*, volitions are determined" (p. 12). "Kant sought to turn the edge of such objections, and doubtless succeeded, but only by involving himself in contradiction" (p. 13). He "relegates

both reality and freedom to a transcendental sphere, which has no conceivable connection with this actual world in which we believe they both exist, and which can enter into no connection with it without involving the whole system in hopeless contradiction" (p. 19). "Now, it would be vain to deny that Kant affords sufficient occasion for the charge which Dr. Schurman with such force brings against him, of simply limiting freedom to "the night in which all cows are black;" and from this point of view the reference to Schelling and Schopenhauer is felicitous, although I must protest against the half-formed resolution to make Hegel also a finger-post to warn off the unwary. But neither Schelling's mysticism nor Schopenhauer's pantheism is really the development of what is most characteristic in Kant's theory. In the section criticised by Dr. Schurman, Kant is engaged in suggesting, in a vague and tentative way, the means of transition from the mechanical view of dogmatism to the teleological view of idealism. (Cf. Hegel's *Logik*, iii, 213 ff.) The ordinary opposition of freedom and necessity, as formulated in the third antinomy, is, he seeks to show, no real opposition at all; or, rather, he points out that there is no absolute reason why we should maintain the mechanical and the teleological conceptions of nature to be mutually exclusive. For the alternative of "necessity or freedom" it is not impossible that we ought to substitute "necessity and freedom." Natural or necessary causation is certainly justified from the point of view of sensible experience—the point of view from which in our ordinary or unspeculative mood we contemplate all things; nay, it is justified absolutely so far as knowable reality is viewed only as a phenomenon in space and time. But we must remember that phenomena do not necessarily exhaust the universe, and, in particular, that the invariable sequence of one event on another—which is the sole content of the natural law of causation—still leaves unresolved the question as to the ultimate ground of the sequence. So far Kant speaks quite generally, and his reply has in view as much his future explanation of the world of nature as requiring to be contemplated teleologically when it is viewed in relation to God, as his ethical doctrine of reason as originating the moral law and introducing man to a purely intelligible realm. But he goes on to apply to man's actions the general view just indicated. His explanation of the compatibility of freedom and natural causation is, as I understand it, briefly this: In our perception of nature—including, of course, man's volitions as in time—there is no activity in any proper sense of the term, but simply an *invariable sequence*. To say that man's volitions come under the law of natural causation is not to say that they are compelled, but only that, so long as we look at them from the empirical point of view, we must find them conditioned like all other phenomena. It is therefore quite possible that the acts of man should proceed from his reason, and yet that they should come under the law of natural causation. All acts, whether free or not, must, as realized in the world of sense, conform to the law of that world. Hence it is that, for him who limits himself to the world of sense, even free acts, supposing that there are such, will seem necessitated; while again, for him who separates a free act from its manifestation, that act will seem independent of the natural law of causation altogether. But neither of these alternatives need be held if it is only recognized that phenomena are not absolute realities, but rather the manner in which Reason manifests itself. This, as it seems to me, is the drift of Kant's reasoning, although it is much obscured, as it must be admitted, by his use of language that is appropriate only in the mouth of the psychological idealist; as also by Kant's caution in refusing to admit that Reason in its theoretical use can possibly establish the reality of freedom. Dr. Schurman has missed the force of some of Kant's expressions from his prepossession

sion that Kant's "noumenon" must necessarily be a mere blank identity, similar to Schelling's "absolute indifference" or Spencer's Unknowable.

In the second section of his critique Dr. Schurman goes on to consider Kant's conception of Freedom. He will confine himself, he tells us, to an examination "into its validity as a theory of the facts of our moral consciousness," without dealing with "its compatibility or its incompatibility with any other part of the Kantian system"—a promise, however, which is very partially kept (see p. 37 ff.). After a lucid sketch of the whole ethical doctrine of Kant, our author proceeds to raise some objections against the Kantian doctrine of Will as practical Reason. He finds much ambiguity in Kant's own statements, but finally he comes to the conclusion that Reason and Will are for Kant identical—a conclusion which is undoubtedly correct. But this seems to him a very objectionable position. It takes away the *differentia* of Will, and makes human action merely an inexplicable fact. "Kant seems to have regarded it as entirely gratuitous to postulate a faculty standing between the action and the law of reason" (p. 32). Hence, like Hegel, he makes Will "a peculiar kind of thinking." Now, as "thought in the Kantian system cannot be peculiar to any individual (though Kant himself may have conceived it thus) but must be a transcendental self-consciousness, that makes the individual a universal," it follows that "the individual will has shrivelled into nothingness at the grasp of universal reason." This is an extraordinary leap. Does Dr. Schurman mean that, if thought were "peculiar to the individual," the will would *not* "shrive into nothingness at the grasp of universal reason"? Surely the affirmation of the universalizing power of thought does not make the individual the mere medium of something-not-himself. On the contrary, a "thought" that should be "peculiar to any individual" would be no thought at all, but a mere play of impressions, of which the individual would be but the passive and unconscious bearer. Nor is it easy to see how the interpolation of a peculiar faculty called will, distinct at once from action and the law of reason, should improve the Kantian theory. What meaning does Dr. Schurman attach to the term "action"? If he does not mean by it mere organic movement, it must be a "peculiar kind of thinking," and this "thinking" cannot be separated from the "law of reason" without becoming pure caprice. It seems, therefore, to me, that, in objecting to Kant's identification of Will and Practical Reason, Dr. Schurman objects to that which constitutes one of Kant's especial claims on our gratitude. By this very identification Kant destroyed that mechanical conception of volition as a separate faculty or "thing" acted upon externally by another faculty or "thing," and at least prepared the way for the solution of the problem of human freedom. "Will," we are told, "is no more practical reason than it is practical imagination or practical sensation. It is the faculty of consciously choosing among motives, from whatever source they come, and of acting upon them." Now, as choice, and acting upon choice, cannot be two distinct things, and as the act of choice is only a "peculiar" determination of self-consciousness, the only difference between Kant and his critic, so far as I can see, is that the former makes Will the expression of a law of reason, while the latter makes it independent of reason, and therefore irrational.

In the third section Kant's moral Principle is considered, and the familiar objection to its empty formalism is stated with great force and clearness. Even this objection seems to me to be made too much of. No doubt the mere form of law will not yield any definite code of moral duties, but Kant was not wrong in fixing upon the pure idea of duty as the condition of freedom. Certainly that idea only presents itself in connection with the choice between alternative courses of conduct; but, on the other hand,

unless an act is willed, not because it is simply more pleasurable than another, but because it "ought" to be done, it has no moral character. In insisting upon the necessity of determining by reason which of several causes ought to be followed, or is consistent with the pure idea of duty, Kant has at least touched the central point of morality. It is true that, in separating absolutely between reason and desire, Kant has made it impossible to deduce specific laws of duty; but if we assume, as he virtually does, that the only problem of ethics is to explain the ground of moral obligation, we must place it where he does—in a universal law of reason. Dr. Schurman, however, is no doubt right in saying that morality "is not incompatible with a principle that differs from the formal law, in that it has a content, but agrees with it in that it is of universal extension" (p. 57); and that "when man no longer follows blindly his selfish appetites and desires, but acts rationally in accordance with the idea he has of his own worth and dignity as man, then his will is good, for it is the unhampered service of reason" (p. 62).

In the remarks just made, which have been directed mainly to points of difference, I am conscious of having conveyed a very inadequate idea of the suggestive character of Dr. Schurman's work; but enough has perhaps been said to show that his essay is well worthy of careful study. The second part, containing a searching criticism of Mr. Spencer's ethical theory, brings out, with great clearness, many of the imperfections which beset the evolutionist ethics of that philosopher.

JOHN WATSON.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

The Platonist. Edited and published by Thomas M. Johnson, Osceola, St. Clair County, Missouri. A monthly periodical devoted to the dissemination of the Platonic Philosophy in all its phases. Pp. 33-48. Two dollars per annum.

Contents of No. 3.—(1) Pearls of Wisdom gathered from Platonic Sources; (2) General Introduction to the Philosophy and Writings of Platon, by Thomas Taylor; (3) Life of Platon (concluded); (4) Commentary of Proklos on the First Alkibiades of Platon, translated from the original Greek, Introduction; (5) The Last Words of Socrates, by Alexander Wilder; (6) On the Utility of the Mathematical and Metaphysical Sciences, by Thomas Taylor. Iamblichos: a Treatise on the Mysteries; a new translation by Alexander Wilder, Part I. (7) That Intelligibles are not External to Mind; and Concerning the Good (from Plotinus); (8) Hipparchos on Tranquillity.

Contents of No. 4.—(1) Pearls of Wisdom gathered from Platonic Sources; (2) The Best Translation of Platon; (3) On the Utility of the Mathematical and Metaphysical Sciences, by Thomas Taylor (reprinted from the Introduction to his Treatise on Theoretic Arithmetic); (4) General Introduction to the Philosophy and Writings of Platon, by Thomas Taylor; (5) A Discourse upon the Mysteries, by Iamblichos, translated by Alexander Wilder, Part I; (6) On the Necessity of Purification, and the Method by which it may be Obtained, by Porphyrios, translation by Thomas Taylor; (7) The Ele-